DOCUMENT RESUME

ED 285 210 CS 505 569

AUTHOR Holloway, Rachel L.
TITLE Presidential Storytelling as Argument: The Functions and Characteristics of Presidential Stories.
PUB DATE Apr 87
NOTE 34p.; Paper presented at the Joint Meeting of the Central States Speech Association and the Southern Speech Communication Association (St. Louis, MO, April 9-12, 1987).
PUB TYPE Viewpoints (120) -- Speeches/Conference Papers (150) -- Reports - Research/Technical (143)

EDRS PRICE MF01/PC02 Plus Postage.
DESCRIPTORS Communication Research; Comparative Analysis; *Discourse Analysis; Narration; *Persuasive Discourse; *Presidents of the United States; *Rhetorical Criticism; *Rhetorical Invention; Speech Communication; Speeches; *Story Telling
IDENTIFIERS Anecdotes; Audience Awareness; Discourse Modes; Presidential Messages; Rhetorical Devices; Rhetorical Stance; *Rhetorical Strategies

ABSTRACT

Noting the persistence of presidential "story" despite its critics, this paper maintains that presidential storytelling involves rhetorical skill and yields rhetorical benefits, and thus qualifies as strategic discourse. Initially examining presidential stories disguised as reports, termed "presidential episodes," the paper analyzes President Johnson's discourse during the Gulf of Tonkin incident in 1964, showing how astute use of rhetoric allowed him to address a broader issue, United States involvement in Vietnam. Next, the paper addresses "presidential anecdotes," defined as narratives that highlight deliberative principles. Furnishing examples from speeches of Presidents Reagan and Johnson, the paper makes the point that the presidential anecdote is highly participative, engaging the public actively in meaning creation and reinforcing the president's dominant and advisory role while maintaining a positive presidential image. The paper then considers the third story type, "presidential romances," which celebrate values through heroic actions of common people. Less controversial than the other two types, the "romance" emphasizes character and permits the president to adopt a personal, and often inspiring rhetoric. Finally, the paper explores the way story types overlap in presidential discourse, furnishing an illustrative diagram of strategic interaction. The paper's conclusion reiterates that presidential stories are more than witty diversions from other political rhetoric, and are in fact a rhetorical alternative in situations where presidents need to justify past action, generate support for present and future policy, and promote particular values through public identifications. (NKA)

****
* Reproductions supplied by EDRS are the best that can be made *
* from the original document. *
****

ED285210

U.S. DEPARTMENT OF EDUCATION
Office of Educational Research and Improvement
EDUCATIONAL RESOURCES INFORMATION CENTER (ERIC)

X This document has been reproduced as received from the person or organization originating it.

☐ Minor changes have been made to improve reproduction quality.

• Points of view or opinions stated in this document do not necessarily represent official OERI position or policy.

PRESIDENTIAL STORYTELLING AS ARGUMENT: THE FUNCTIONS AND CHARACTERISTICS OF PRESIDENTIAL STORIES

Rachel L. Holloway
Purdue University
Department of Communication
West Lafayette, IN 47907

"PERMISSION TO REPRODUCE THIS MATERIAL HAS BEEN GRANTED BY

Rachel L. Holloway

TO THE EDUCATIONAL RESOURCES INFORMATION CENTER (ERIC)."

CS 505 569

BEST COPY AVAILABLE

PRESIDENTIAL STORYTELLING AS ARGUMENT: THE FUNCTIONS AND CHARACTERISTICS OF PRESIDENTIAL STORIES

President Reagan's comments to the New Pioneers in February, 1985, while not remarkable, exemplify Reagan's rhetorical style. He opened with the now well-worn comparison of the intelligence assembled before him to that of Thomas Jefferson . . . alone, joked about his "honorary" degrees . . . all of them, and then spoke the inevitable words, "and that reminded me of a story--something always reminds me of a story."[1] While Reagan's stories often are dismissed as so much meaningless talk, as diversions from deeper treatments of issues, or as signs of simplemindedness, his storytelling continues a presidential tradition, a tradition in which some presidents are more celebrated than others. Lincoln, for instance, was a noted reconteur of his day;[2] Lyndon Johnson was called "the greatest storyteller of his age";[3] Gerald Ford, on the other hand, despite his efforts to uphold the presidential storytelling tradition, was deemed a "storykiller" by critics.[4] Although not all president's exhibit equal storytelling skill and few presidents, if any, match Reagan's frequency in tale telling, presidents have told, and do tell, stories to the American people.

Given the presidential story's degraded position among many observers, the prevalence of stories throughout presidential discourse appears troubling. Such a perspective suggests that all presidents are rhetorically inept to some degree. While that explanation might suffice for some presidents, to call the "Great Communicator" rhetorically inept challenges most notions of consistency. On the other hand, if presidential stories involve rhetorical skill and yield rhetorical benefits, the presidential story's persistence is tenable. This paper supports the latter contention. It argues that presidential stories are strategic discourse. More specifically, while all presidents tell stories, not all stories which presidents tell are equal. Some presidential stories justify

past action. Other advise behavior consonant with a president's policies, and still others promote public identifications which support not only the president's policies and programs but presidential ethos as well. Other discourse forms might accomplish these same objectives. However, presidential stories argue in a way particularly suited to the public forum. As has been argued elsewhere, stories present "good reasons" which warrant decision and action and do so in a way which requires no special expertise; storytelling relies on common knowledge and thus is a "people's" rhetoric.[5] Perhaps most important, however, is that despite all their argumentative potential, stories are, to most listeners, innocent and inconsequential tales, bits of discourse which amuse or perhaps, in special cases, enlighten. Thus, stories provide a president with a non-threatening, and usually unchallenged, public argumentative form. Presidential stories, therefore, warrant analysis.

In order to understand the full range of presidential stories' strategic rhetorical benefits, this paper describes the purposes and characteristics of three presidential story types--the presidential episode, the presidential anecdote, and the presidential romance. Once the types are illumined individually, the possible interaction of presidential stories of different types is explored. A final section will present the yields of presidential story analysis.

Presidential Episodes: Stories Disguised as Reports

Because humans understand action only when it is related to experiences already known, analyzed and evaluated, presidential action is accounted for and recounted by the press and other observers continuously; a president's actions are made meaningful when situated in the context of national and presidential pasts. Since others' accounts may be unfavorable or contrary to a president's

interests, he often chooses to present his own account, to tell his own story of his decisions/actions. For instance, Kennedy explained the evidence and responses that comprised the Cuban Missile Crisis. Less that two years later, Johnson reported "unprovoked attacks" on American ships in the Tonkin Gulf and justified his decision to counter those attacks. Later, Nixon detailed his involvement in Watergate. Carter exposed a failed attempt to rescue Americans held hostage in Iran. Reagan told the public of a Korean airliner shot down by the Soviet Union, of Marines killed by terrorists in Labanon, and of the United States' involvement in military operations on Grenada. In each of these cases, and in many others, a president told the story of one incident in his overall record; he told a presidential episode.

A presidential episode typically is prompted by presidential action which requires public justification (i.e. use of executive privilege). The presidential episode's purpose, then, is to orient the public(s) to past presidential acts; the episode serves an historical function. As White contends, the historical narrative (one that describes past acts) tells the public in "what direction to think about the events and charges thought about the events with different emotional valences."[6] Through his episodic discourse, a president attempts to create in the public(s) a predisposition which supports specific action already taken and bolsters his policy positions generally. In its basic characteristics, a presidential episode is forensic discourse. Its judges (the public) consider the quality of past acts in order to make decisions concerning justice.

In order to create the desired public predisposition, the episode follows the classical stasis progression.[7] First, facts are reported. Almost simultaneously, the definition and quality of the facts are presented. The president hopes that this "factual" interpretation will construct a scene in

which his past acts are justified. Moreover, the scenic construction also may set the political stage for *future* policy. While the presidential episode is a strategic narrative about recent events, it appears to be an informative factual report, rather than a story. It therefore carries truth constraints applicable to all forensic discourse.

When a president tells an episode, he implicitly agrees to "tell the truth, the whole truth, and nothing but the truth." His story must at least *seem* to judges to be a complete and truthful account. Like other witnesses, a president's initial ethos is essential to his success. His "expertness" as a witness allows him to make statements about past events and have them accepted with little or no outside corroboration. If the episode is challenged, however, the president may suffer severe consequences. A challenged episode implies that the president is a prevaricator or liar, not merely a poor storyteller. Thus, while often advantageous, a presidential episode carries with it a great liability as well.

Perhaps no episode reveals more felicitiously both the strategic power and possible risks which inhere in a president's incidental narrative than Lyndon Johnson's Tonkin Gulf episode. The Tonkin Gulf episode will serve here as a general framework within which the characteristics of episodes can be explored in greater depth.

On August 4, 1964, Johnson addressed the American people and informed them of alleged attacks against American ships in the Tonkin Gulf near Vietnam.[8] He began his remarks in episodic fashion; he reported the facts.

> As President and Commander in Chief, it is my duty to the American people to report that renewed hostile actions against United States ships on the high seas in the Gulf of Tonkin have today required me to order the military forces of the United States to take action in reply.
>
> The initial attack on the destroyer *Maddox*, on August 2, was repeated today by a number of hostile vessels attacking

> two U.S. destroyers with torpedoes. The destroyers and supporting aircraft acted at once on the order I gave after the initial act of aggression. We believe that at least two of the attacking boats were sunk.[9] There were no U.S. losses.

While Johnson relied in this particular description on the word "report" to set the episode's informative tone, in other cases presidents have bolstered their "factualness" explicitly. For instance, in his Tonkin Gulf remarks on the next day, Johnson gave a "bare recital of the facts."[10] In remarks on the Soviet arms buildup in Cuba, Kennedy states in his opening sentences, that "within the past week, unmistakable evidence has established the fact that a series of offensive missile sites is now in preparation on that imprisoned island (emphasis added)."[11] Nixon asserts equal status for his Watergate information. He claims that the Watergate transcripts are "accurate," that they "tell all," and that they demonstrate "the fact that the President has nothing to hide in this matter (emphasis added)."[12] Reagan also presents, he says, "incontrovertible evidence" which verifies the "shocking facts" that Soviet jets knowingly shot down a civilian Korean airliner.[13]

Of course, "facts" are disputable and evidence is controvertible. Yet, the "factual" assertions found in presidential episodes are powerful for two reasons. First, common sense and everyday language use tells most people that facts are concrete and certain. Episodes as "factual reports" are thus virtually immune to public challenge. Second, the judges' acceptance of information rests heavily on their estimation of witness credibility. If a president is respected by the public (and respect, of course, is not equivalent to popularity), the credibility and access to information lent by his position make him an uncompromisable source. Nixon's Watergate episode demonstrates, however, that presidential storytellers are not "unimpeachable" sources. When a president's credibility is insufficient to warrant his episode's acceptance, the

Congress may remove him from his powerful position, if he does not remove himself first. Johnson's Tonkin Gulf episode, on the other hand, shows that a president's credibility may lead to acceptance of a presidential episode that is, in many ways, a "tall tale." The essay now returns to Johnson's episode to explain its initial success and later failure.

As noted earlier, Johnson began the Tonkin Gulf episode with a report of the "facts." The episode's overall strategy required that he then interpret those facts. Johnson defined the Tonkin Gulf events as "attacks" of "hostile" quality. He constructed a "crisis" situation.

> The attacks were deliberate.
> The attacks were unprovoked.
> The attacks have been answered.[14]

Johnson then argued passionately that the scene called for his "fitting" response: "Aggression--deliberate, willful, and systematic aggression--has unmasked its face to the entire world. The world remembers--the world must never forget--that aggression unchallenged is aggression unleashed."[15] In a special message to Congress, Johnson again reported the events of previous days and then reiterated that the United States was determined "to bring about the end of Communist subversion and aggression" in southeast Asia.[16]

While a presidential episode narrates events within a specific time frame, it also is a rhetorical form embedded within other discourses and within a specific context. Episodes' overall rhetorical consequences, therefore, are understood best when placed in an encompassing situation. For instance, Johnson's Tonkin Gulf episode gains significance when placed within Johnson's deliberative goals. Johnson used the Tonkin Gulf episode to address a broader issue, U.S. involvement in Vietnam. Based on his episodic interpretation, Johnson proposed a resolution which gave him the authority to act against "Communist aggression" as he deemed necessary. Congressional debate on the

resolution demonstrated the influence of Johnson's narrative. Senator Fulbright, the congressional spokesperson on the issue, stated that "the facts of the immediate situation are clear."[17] He submitted that the North Vietnamese attack was "a calculated act of military aggression."[18] The American action, of course, was "limited" and "appropriate."[19] Fulbright, and all but two senators, accepted Johnson's episode. Congress gave Johnson free reign in Southeast Asia as a result of his strategic telling of the Tonkin Gulf episode. Thus, the forensic discourse of the episode prepared the context for Johnson's deliberative goals. In 1964, Johnson's episode was a success.

Johnson's polarized description of an evil enemy who <u>forced</u> the United States to act is perhaps most closely paralleled by Kennedy's Cuban Missile Crisis episode.[20] However, presidential episodes which encompass somewhat different situations evince a similar scenic motivation. For example, in a domestic crisis, Johnson argued that he was <u>compelled</u> to send federal troops to Detroit in 1967 to end "lawlessness."[21]

> I am sure the American people will realize that I take this action with the greatest regret--and only because of the clear, unmistakable, and undisputed evidence that Governor Romney of Michigan and the local officials in Detroit have been unable to bring the situation under control.[22]

Likewise, Carter outlined the situational constraints that "caused" the attempt to rescue Americans held hostage in Iran.

> This rescue attempt had to await my judgment that the Iranian authorities could not or would not resolve this crisis on their own initiative. With the steady unraveling of authority in Iran and the mounting dangers that were posed to the safety of the hostages themselves and the growing realization that their early release was highly unlikely, I made a decision to commence the rescue operations plans. This attempt became a necessity and a duty.[23]

Again, a scene, as described by the president, forced difficult decisions and actions.

Usually, an episode fades into the presidential record once it is told and accepted. Successful episodes sometimes are recalled to relive the adventure or to remind the public of the president's past success but otherwise are left to history. The Tonkin Gulf episode, however, was not allowed to join its counterparts so easily. Johnson's highly successful 1964 episode was challenged and rewritten in 1968.

Between the initial acceptance of the Tonkin Gulf episode and its much later reexamination, President Johnson suffered from an ever-widening "credibility gap." [24] Curious observers found that Johnson often misled those around him and in other instances simply lied. Two Washington correspondents devised the LBJ Credibility test to assess the president's veracity.

> When the President smooths down the hair on the back of his head, he's telling the truth; when he strokes the side of his nose, he's telling the truth; when he rubs his hands, he's telling the truth; but when he starts moving his lips, he's lying.[25]

Since Johnson's Tonkin Gulf episode relied primarily on his credibility as a public witness, it is not surprising that the episode was challenged as the credibility gap grew. In 1968, Tonkin Gulf again was the subject on the United states Senate floor. The discussions differed greatly from the statements of trust and support characteristic of the 1964 debate. Senator Morse, one of two senators who voted against the Tonkin Gulf resolution in 1964, recounted the events. No longer did the events in Tonkin Gulf appear as a clear-cut case of "unwarranted aggression." Morse suggested that the Senate committee which reviewed the Tonkin Gulf incident had been misled and observed that "we might have had an entirely different attitude in the Senate if we had been told all of the facts then about the background of the Tonkin Gulf incident."[26] Senator

Morse recognized that Johnson's credibility was such that his reports of past facts were taken for granted. Had Johnson attempted to tell a similar episode in 1967, however, it might have failed. The press and Congress would have questioned his "facts" immediately. The rest of the episode might then have been left untold.[27]

Johnson's Tonkin Gulf episode demonstrates that a president's credibility is essential to his episodic discourse. A presidential episode is primarily "ethos-using" discourse.[28] Since information is often scarce in situations which call forth episodes, the public cannot check a president's report. If they accept his report, it is an act of faith. Without credibility, the episode may not move past the initial reports of facts to the critical definitions of those facts. While the president may charge the episode with emotional valences, and may define events in ways which support his past actions and proposed policies, any tampering with the "factual events" may, in the long run, subvert the episode's purposes. Ideally, a presidential episode is complete, accurate, and, therefore, wholly believable. The episode's potential however is seductive. Like most tempting forms, its liabilities should be respected.

Such risk does not inhere in all presidential storytelling, however. While other stories do not perhaps have the potential to justify past actions, presidential anecdotes can reinforce a president's policies through their emphasis on principles of action, and can in a broad sense, prepare the listener to accept a president's deliberative proposals. A more complete explanation of presidential anecdotes and their characteristics follows in the next section.

Presidential Anecdotes: Deliberative Principles in Narrative

When speaking to a group of Polish Americans in 1983, President Reagan attempted to demonstrate growing internal cynicism in the U.S.S.R. by recounting a story told by Russian citizens.

> The story is that a Commissar visited a collective farm, and grabbed one of the workers to talk to him and said, "how are things here?" "Oh," he said, "everything is just wonderful." He said, "There are no complaints, haven't heard a single complaint." "Well, he said, "how are the crops?" "Oh," he said, "the crops--never better, everything just fine." "What about potatoes?" He said, "Potatoes," he said, "if we piled them up in one pile, they'd reach the foot of God." And the Commissar said, "This is the Soviet Union. There is no God." He said, "That's all right; there are no potatoes."[29]

President Lyndon Johnson, in pointing to the difficulty in speaking at the end of a program, told the anecdote.

> I remember once back in my home country a preacher was vexed because one of his congregation always went to sleep in the midst of the sermon. One Sunday while he was giving the devil fits, sure enough his sleeping worshiper was snoring gently on the front row.
>
> The preacher determined he would fix this character and fix him once and for all. So in a whisper he asked the congregation, "All who want to go to heaven, please rise." As one man, they all got to their feet except the front-row dozer. He kept snoring on. Then the preacher shouted at the top of his voice, "All those who want to be with the devil please rise." The sleepyhead came awake with a start. He jumped to his feet. He saw the preacher standing tall and angry in the pulpit, and he said, "Well, Preacher, I don't know what it is we are voting on, but it looks like you and me are the only ones for it."[30]

Usually listeners assume that anecdotes such as these are inserted in other discourse to add humor. And, indeed, they are in many cases. Yet, like most parables, the presidential anecdote uses a simple plot to make a point about human behavior.[31] The presidential anecdote is short (two or three paragraphs) and describes what one or two real or fictional characters did. The plot exemplifies some principle, some piece of wisdom, that is passed from the storyteller to the listener. The presidential anecdote implicitly suggests to the listener how he/she <u>should</u> act. The presidential anecdote, then, is openly advisory. Closely tied to the anecdote's advisory capacity is its participative

form. The president never states the moral or principle which the story carries. Rather, the listener must fill in details and unstated connections in order to understand the anecdote's meaning. This enthymematic process demands a listener's active participation in the story's construction. Because it highlights principles through a simple plot, the presidential anecdote, unlike a presidential episode, need not be "true" or "factual." It only needs to make sense. An anecdote that features a mule talking to a lazy dog may make its point as well as if the characters were human. It is the principle illumined through the characters' interaction that is primary. Examples clarify best the complex interweaving of these characteristics.

It is not unusual for a president to introduce his anecdote with a lead in sentence as Reagan did in the example that opened this section. While phrases like "that reminds me of a story" or "let me tell you a story" may seem like mere introductory devices, they also invite the listener to join the president in a storyteller-storylistener role. Kirkwood suggests that this relationship is one of dominance and submission.[32] The storyteller-storylistener relationship emerges from a long history of storytelling—the Greek rhapsode to the gathered citizenry; parents to children; teachers to students; preachers to parishioners. In each case, the storyteller is considered more knowledgable, of greater status, and more powerful than the listener. In as much as this tradition is upheld in the non-interactive, one-way communication of a presidential anecdote, the president's position as wise leader and advisor to the people is reinforced. Thus, presidential anecdotes are "ethos-building" rhetoric. For all the anecdote's resources to enhance ethos, however, not all presidents play the storyteller role well because of their characters. Given Jimmy Carter's attempts to identify as one of the "people," it is not surprising that he rarely accepted the storyteller role. The images were incongruent.

Ronald Reagan, on the other hand, supports his storyteller role when he adopts a conservative, somewhat formal image and, interestingly, when he mentions his age. He appears the wise storyteller. Reagan also demonstrates that the presidential anecdote's content can support the storyteller role as well.

> You know, I have to tell you a little personal experience here. I was Governor of California back in the riotous days of the sixties . . . I remember one day when a group of the leaders from the campuses of the University of California to Sacramento . . . They came in and, as was the custom of the day of the particular group of young people, they were barefoot, and torn t-shirt, and slouched in their chairs. And finally one of them who was the spokesman said to me, "Governor, it's impossible for you to understand us." And I tried to pass it off. I said, "Well, we know more about being young than we do about being old." And he said, "No, your generation cannot understand their own sons and daughters." He said, "you didn't grow up in an era of space travel, of jet travel, of cibernetics, computers figuring in seconds what it used to take men years to figure out." And he went on like that. And usually you only think of the answer after you're gone, but the Lord was good to me. And he talked long enough that I finally interrupted him, and I said, "Wait a minute. It's true what you said. We didn't grow up, my generation, with those things. We invented them."[33]

Reagan uses the "key in" line that enacts the storyteller-storylistener relationship and then tells his listeners, in so many words, to respect their elders. That message consequently reinforces the authority of Ronald Reagan, our oldest president, and also signals the listener to show proper deference. The anecdote itself reiterates his appropriateness as a storyteller (since he is one of the anecdote's wise, superior "inventors") and, by implication, reestablishes his authority a president.

While Reagan's authority anecdote explicitly promotes the president's dominant position, most anecdotes deal primarily with principles for action; they advise the listener on appropriate viewpoints and actions. For example, Reagan's anecdote about Russians, God, and potatoes gives the listener a

particular view of Soviet life. Russia is God-less, highly authoritarian, and deprived. But, of course, the Soviet anecdote, not Reagan, asserts the negative view of Russia. Reagan merely recounted an example of a Russian story. Thus, Reagan makes his point while strategically dodging responsibility for the anecdote's claim. In other cases, however, presidents use anecdotes to make "points" about particular policies rather than broad perspectives. Johnson told this clearly political anecdote on several occasions.

> It seems to me that it is a little dark in here. If it is, it is because of the new budget and we are trying to economize on our light bill. It may surprise you, but the lights on this establishment are $4,600 a month alone, so you can imagine how many checks will have to have deductions to even pay the light bill.
>
> I am reminded of the story that the Postmaster General told me about getting a letter from a little boy who had lost his father and whose widowed mother was having difficulty making ends meet. He wrote a letter to the Lord and said, "Dear God: Please send mom $100 to help with the family."
>
> The letter wound up on the Postmaster General's desk and he was quite touched by it. He at that time still had a little money left over from what he had earned at Prudential, so he took a $20 bill out of his pocket, put it in a Postmaster General's envelope, put an airmail stamp on it, and sent it to the little boy. About two weeks later he got a letter back that said, "Dear God: Much obliged for all you have done. It is a great help. We appreciate it. But we need another $100. If you don't mind, when you send it to momma this time, don't route it through Washington, because they deducted 80 percent of it there."[34]

As in each of the other presidential anecdotes, the listener is left to discover the "point." He/she fills in the explanation of "what the boy thought," chuckles perhaps at the contrast between the boy's theological naivete and his political sophistication, and then might think "yes, the government does tax too heavily" and then perhaps, "well, at least the President feels taxation's effects, too. I guess we all should conserve." The listener's participation in the president's anecdote gives it meaning. And, hopefully, the

listener will fill in the principle the president wishes to make.[35] Since narrative interpretation relies on "pre-known" relationships (empirical, normative, and aesthetic), most listeners should develop similar interpretations.[36] The audience is not always to blame, however, when an anecdote fails. As with a joke, much of an anecdotes success is in the telling. For instance, President Jimmy Carter used an anecdote in a commencement speech at the University of Notre Dame that leaves the listener (at least this particular listener) somewhat disconcerted.

> I tried to think of a story that would illustrate two points simultaneously and also be brief, which is kind of a difficult assignment. I was sitting on the Truman Balcony the other night with my good friend, Charles Kirbo, who told me about a man who was arrested and taken into court for being drunk and for setting a bed on fire. When the judge asked him how he plead, he said, "not guilty." He said, "I was drunk but the bed was on fire when I got in it." I think most of the graduates can draw the parallel between that statement and what you are approaching after this graduation exercise. But there are two points to that, and I'll come to the other one in just a few minutes.[37]

While Carter goes on to discuss the contributions of several Roman Catholic leaders in the fight for human rights and talks of their being "blamed for the very circumstance which they helped to dramatize," the anecdote's "two points" are elusive at best. Ideally, the presidential anecdote makes its point immediately. Yet, because a presidential anecodote is like a joke, even the best anecdote may fall on deaf ears.

Luckily, the hazards of presidential anecdotes are limited to momentary failure or inappropriateness. Anecdotal failure may be due to the listener's inability or unwillingness to accept the anecdote's deeper meaning. For instance, a potential listener may refuse to adopt the storylistener role because he/she feels the president's timing is poor, that an anecdote is inappropriate to the situation, or that the president is not sufficiently wise

to adopt the storyteller role. In these cases, an anecdote probably is dismissed as an inferior discourse (as it often is). The anecdote rarely, however, offers the opportunity for listeners to charge a president with intentional deceptions. The story's emphasis on plot requires only that the anecdote is sensible, not factual. In Johnson's anecdotes provided here, it really makes little difference if the preacher or the boy existed. The principle is demonstrated through the characters' interactions, not because the anecdote described "real" situations. In other words, the initial critical judgment made by the listener concerns comprehension of the principle at hand. Once the principle is recognized, the critic compares that principle with his/her own experience to test its meaning against what he/she knows to be true.[38] As long as the listener can imagine the interaction and its consequences, whether it be between two rodents gathering winter stores or a governor and students discussing authority, the presidential anecdote is sensible; plot, not character, is central. The presidential anecdote's loose truth requirements allow easy adaptation of the anecdote to varying situations. Lincoln's anecdotes, with minor changes in character and setting, could be told by Reagan with equal success. In this sense, anecdotes are timeless.

The presidential anecdote serves rhetorical needs in several ways then. It is highly participative and thus engages the public/listener actively in meaning creation. It also is a vehicle through which a president can give advice without making explicit statements. When ambiguity or abstract principle are strategic, an anecdote is an appropriate and enticing form of presidential rhetoric. The anecdote also reinforces the president's dominant and advisory role and thus may serve as an on-going tactic to maintain a positive presidential image.

The third story type, the presidential romance, exhibits characteristics of both the presidential episode and the presidential anecdote. It perhaps provides the president his greatest latitude as a storyteller.

Presidential Romances: A Celebration of Values Through Heroic Character

Of all the stories presidents tell, perhaps the most moving and memorable are stories of heroic, common people around the world. For example, President Reagan told this story about heroic American servicemen to inspire the nation in the Easter and Passover season.

> While the San Diego based U.S.S. Hoel was steaming toward Melbourne, Australia, on Ash Wednesday, its crew heard of terrible bush fires sweeping two Australian States. More than 70 people were killed and the destruction was great. Well, the crew of this American ship raised $4,000 from their pockers to help, but they felt that it wasn't enough. So, leaving only a skeleton crew aboard, the 100 American sailors gave up a day's shore leave, rolled up their sleeves, and set to work rebuilding a ruined community on the opposite end of the Earth. Just Americans being Americans, but something for all of us to be proud of.[39]

Stories such as this one, which praise the heroic actions of common people, comprise the presidential romance story type. As in all romance, the hero, which embodies values and beliefs consonant with the president's political position, is the focus of the story.[40] While presidential episodes feature an overall scene, and presidential anecdotes emphasize plot, the presidential romance is a celebration of character. Its purpose is to build identifications among the hero, the public and the president. The values embodied by the hero provide the means for identification. Thus, the presidential romance is an epideictic rhetoric; it promotes the readherence of values.[41] The public acts as a critic. Ideally, they both appreciate the story and gain insight from it.[42] Since epideictic deals with present concerns, the critical public

assesses the president's celebration of contemporary heros facing contemporary problems. While heros from the past may be inspiring, their distance ill-serves the president's immediate advisory needs. The president hopes to create value-based identifications which support his policies and reinforce his ethos. Examination of presidential romance discourse reveals the more specific tactics used within this presidential identification strategy.

In a speech to Mississippi residents, President Reagan attempted to create identifications based on the values of courage, neighborliness, and kindness through this story about Tommy Wallace.

> Take the case of Tommy Wallace, from Marion County, who heard the screams of people who'd been washed out of their cars by the raging waters. Wallace launched his small boat into the torrent and, braving the washing waters and the floating debris and logs, saved the lives of seven people. Later, when he was asked about it, he replied, "Well, you just don't think about being scared. You just feel like you've got to do what you've got to do.[43]

While a listener probably could discern the values the president wishes to dramatize, the president leaves no doubt. Unlike the presidential anecdote, where the listener is left to gleen meaning from ambiguity, the president makes the romance's meaning clear through a two-step process. In the first step, the president gives his account of the heroic act. In the second step, he highlights the values which the hero exemplifies. Reagan noted the values upheld in Tommy Wallace's action in the two paragraphs that immediately followed the heroic account.

> Well, during the floods, there were numerous accounts of neighbor helping neighbor, of heroism and kindness crossing all racial and economic lines. The people of Mississippi showed the country that when the chips are down, we are all Americans.
>
> Today, we have a heavy responsibility; the future of peace and freedom of our children and of all mankind rests on our shoulders. But we have no reason to fear. Instead, like Tommy Wallace and all good Americans, we'll do what we have to do.[44]

In this romance as in that which opened this section, Reagan made the desired identifications explicit. The heroic sailors were "just Americans being Americans." By implication, the values the sailors enacted in Australia are part of all Americans. Likewise, the phrase "like Tommy Wallace and all good Americans" and "we are all Americans" exhort the listeners to act as the hero acts--to hold the same values. Moreover, since the president leads "all good Americans," he too is identified with the exposed values.

The heros of presidential romances, while present, need not always be Americans. When a president wishes to build identifications across national borders and, consequently, build support for American intervention abroad, he may employ the romance to celebrate American values in non-American heros. Kennedy adopted this strategy in his explanation after the Bay of Pigs invasion.

> Mr. Castro has said that these [soldiers] were mercenaries. According to press reports, the final message to be relayed from the refugee forces on the beach came from the rebel commander when asked if he wished to be evacuated. His answer was: "I will never leave this country." That is not the reply of a mercenary. He has gone now to join in the mountains countless other guerilla fighters, who are equally determined that the dedication of those who have their lives shall not be forgotten, and that Cuba must not be abandoned to the Communists. And we do not intend to abandon it either.[45]

Interestingly, Reagan tells a nearly identical romance to encourage support for Salvadoran "freedom fighters."

> Members of Congress who went there [El Salvador] as observers told me of a woman who was wounded by rifle fire on the way to the polls, who refused to leave the line to have her wound treated until after she had voted. Another woman had been told by the guerillas that she would be killed when she returned from the polls, and she told the guerrillas, "you can kill me, you can kill my family, kill my neighbors, you can't kill us all." The real freedom fighters of El Salvador

> turned out to be the people of that country--the young, the old, the in-between--more than a million of them out of a population of less than five million. The world should respect this courage, and not allow it to be belittled or forgotten. And again, I say in good conscience, we can never turn our backs on that.[46]

In these romances, both presidents rely on powerful democratic symbols. Kennedy aligns the United States and Cuban guerillas against their common "Communist" enemy. Reagan uses a democratic institution, the popular election, as the strategic scene in which the Salvadoran heroes act. Since most Americans can visualize easily the lines at a polling place, and probably cannot fathom voting under life threatening conditions, the woman's stand against the guerillas is even more inspiring. Few Americans, given this story, could deny the woman's courage or would withdraw American support from her. The artistry of this romance is that it directs attention away from the broader ramifications of political involvement in Central America and toward one woman bravely facing death to carry out her democratic rights. Simultaneously, the simple romance supports the president's credibility. Perelman notes that a speaker's ethos is increased when he/she praises worthy subjects and blames ignoble ones.[47] A president can use a romance to reinforce values consonant with his policies and bolster his credibility at the same time.

The risks in presidential romances seem minimal. Presidential romances are a conservative rhetoric and by their nature rarely generate controversy. Certainly a gross miscalculation of present American values or a particularly deplorable example deserve sanction. But, typically, presidents avoid such mistakes. In at least one instance, however, a president attempted to use the romantic form to encourage controversial change. President Lyndon Johnson placed himself in a vulnerable position as he told a romance which featured a black heroine. He introduced her story with a call for identification.

> The best way for you to understand how the other fellow feels is to put yourself in his place for a while and see how you would feel under similar circumstances. That is not only true of those who have suffered from ignorance and poverty and disease and illiteracy but that is true also of those who have suffered from discrimination . . . . I tell this story because it is a rather touching personal experience I have had. One of the great ladies that I have known is kind of chief of staff of our operation, our house. She has been with us 20 years, she is a college graduate, but when she comes from Texas to Washington she never knows where she can get a cup of coffee. She never knows when she can go to a bathroom. She has to take 3 or 4 hours out to go across to the other side of the tracks to locate the place where she can sit down and buy a meal. You wouldn't want that to happen to your wife or to your mother or to your sister, but somehow or other you take it for granted when it happens to someone way off there.
>
> So the time has come in our national life when we have got to make our Bill of Rights real, when we have got to make our Declaration of Independence come true, when we have got to make our Constitution a living document. We have got to do unto others as we would have them do unto us.[48]

Johnson's explicit personal identification with his black employee was somewhat risky in 1964. Some citizens certainly believed that he praised an ignoble person, not a quiet heroine. Despite possible negative reaction, Johnson identified his heroine explicitly with the American values of work, loyalty, education, and perserverence against adversity. Sensing that his audience might reject the identifications he sought, he tried to make the association easier through a comparison of this woman with other women dear to the audience--wives, mothers, and sisters. Then to support further his perspective, he called forth American political symbols--the Bill of Rights, the Declaration of Independence, and the Constitution. Finally, he turned to the Bible's golden rule to reach his audience. Johnson's success with this romance is, of course, unknown. Yet, he demonstrates the flexibility of the form and, through its use, commends it to other political actors.

In its emphasis on character, the romance allows a president to adopt a highly personal, and often inspiring, rhetoric. Unlike the presidential episode which concentrates on what has been, or the presidential anecdote that looks to what the public should do, the presidential romance tells the American people who they are and who they should be. The presidential romance celebrates heros that embody American values. It is not coincidental that the particular values celebrated align with the president's policies and image.

While the story types do not fit neatly into generic classifications, they do resemble closely Aristotle's classical genres (see figure 1). The story types move from forensic concerns (episode), to deliberative concerns (anecdote), to epideictic concerns (romance). They deal respectively with the past, the future, and the present. Yet, rarely are discourses purely forensic, deliberative, or epideictic. Likewise, the story types rarely remain separate. On the contrary, they may interact in useful, and inlightening ways. It is to the interaction of story types that this essay now turns.

Strategic Interaction of Presidential Stories

Presidential story types do overlap. Each can, in a sense, contribute to justificative, deliberative, or epideictic goals. Yet, it is the story types' differences that contribute to their interactive potential. For instance, since episodes make demands on ethos, anecdotes and romances may be used as on-going

	PRESIDENTIAL EPISODE	PRESIDENTIAL ANECDOTE	PRESIDENTIAL ROMANCE
PURPOSE	TO JUSTIFY PAST ACTS	TO ADVISE COURSES OF ACTION	TO PROMOTE READHERENCE OF VALUES; TO PROMOTE IDENTIFICATIONS
TIME CONSTRAINTS	TIME-EMBEDDED; TOLD WITHIN A SPECIFIC TIME FRAME	TIMELESS; ADAPTED TO SITUATIONS/ PURPOSES	TIME-BOUND; TOLD WITHIN A CULTURAL FRAME
PUBLIC CHARACTER	JUDGE	CRITIC	CRITIC
FOCUS/ MEANS	SCENE	PLOT	CHARACTER
TRUTH CONSTRAINTS	FACTUAL	SENSIBLE	BELIEVABLE
SUBJECT	A PRESIDENT'S PAST ACTS	HUMAN INTERACTION; HOW THE PUBLIC SHOULD ACT	AMERICAN VALUES; WHO AMERICANS ARE AND SHOULD BE
ETHOS FUNCTION	ETHOS-USING	ETHOS-BUILDING	ETHOS-BUILDING

ethos-building strategies. Presidential anecdotes and romances, therefore, undergird presidential episodes, even if they sometimes are removed from the episode in both substance and in time. Yet, the anecdote and romance also may be closely tied to the episode. If a presidential episode's details become a matter of controversy, a romance or anecdote may assert values or principles that avoid the troublesome detail yet still provide a strategic orientation to an issue or event. If the president feels anecdotes and romances are insufficient to overcome episodic difficulties, he might shift attention to a second, more controlled episode and thereby hope to diffuse the first episode's intensity. Theoretically, the combinations suggested here only begin to tap the presidential stories' interactive potential. Perhaps more interesting than the generation of numerous story type interactions is a demonstration of a few combinations in discourse. President Reagan's treatment of the terrorist bombing of the Marine barracks in Lebanon provides a case of story type interacton.

On October 23, 1983, 241 Marines died in a terorist attack in Lebanon.[49] President Reagan made a brief statement the same day.[50] He expressed sympathy for the Marines' families. He then defined the terrorist act as "despicable" and as evidence of a "bestial nature" among those seeking power in Lebanon. At the end of his statement, Reagan rededicated United States support in Lebanon: "we must be more determined than ever that they cannot take over that vital and strategic area of the earth."[51] The episode was troublesome. Critics of the United States' presence in Lebanon now had evidence that the peacekeeping mission was ill-conceived.[52] Reagan's emotive statements failed to answer questions about the Marines' continued safety.

On the heels of the Lebanon attack, President Reagan began a new episode, the invasion of Grenada. Whether the product of strategic planning or

fortuitious coincidence, the Grenada episode quickly drew attention away from Lebanon. Reagan opened the story on October 25, 1983.

> Ladies and gentlemen, on Sunday, October 23rd, the United States received an urgent, formal request from the five member nations of the Organization of Eastern Caribbean States to assist in a joint effort to restore order and democracy on the island of Grenada . . . Early this morning, forces from six Caribbean democracies and the United States began a landing or landings on the island of Grenada in the Eastern Caribbean.[53]

True to the episodic form, Reagan asserted that the U.S. had no choice but to become involved: "Let there be no misunderstanding, this collective action has been forced on us by events that have no precedent in the eastern Caribbean and no place in any civilized society."[54] Reagan reiterated this rationale in his report to Congress.[55]

Two days later, on October 25, 1983, Reagan merged the Lebanon and Grenada episodes in an address to the nation.[56] He began with a reference to an episode from two moths earlier--the downing of a Korean airliner by the Soviet Union. Reagan implicitly reminded his listeners of the present Soviet threat.[57] Through his reference to a past success, Reagan reminded the public of his strong leadership position. He then told the dramatic story of the Lebanon bombing. The definitional terms were passionate--"hidious, insane attack," "horror."[58] Then, in non-narrrative discourse, Reagan provided an overall justification for the United States' presence in Lebanon.

With the Lebanon episode recounted, Reagan turned his attention, and that of his listeners, to Grenada. He again recounted the events of recent days and provided a justification similar to that given for the Marines' continued mission in Lebanon--to restore order, to thwart Soviet infiltraton. Reagan noted explicitly that "the events in Lebanon and Grenada, though oceans apart, are closely related."[59] Yet, for all their episodic similarity, a presidential romance was used, in the end, to unite the episodes.

> May I share something with you I think you'd like to know? It's something that happened to the Commandant of our Marine Corps, General Paul Kelley, while he was visiting our critically injured marines in an Air Force hospital. It says more than any of us could ever hope to say about the gallantry and heroism of these young men, young men who serve so willingly so that others might have a chance at peace and freedom in their own lives and in the life of their country.
>
> I'll let General Kelley's words describe the incident. He spoke of a "young marine with more tubes going in and out of his body than I have ever seen in one body. He couldn't see very well. He reached up and grabbed my four stars, just to make sure I was who I said I was. He held my hand with a firm grip. He was making signals, and we realized he wanted to tell me something. We put a pad of paper in his hand—and he wrote 'Semper Fi.'"
>
> Well, if you've been a Marine or if, like myself you're an admirer of the Marines, you know those words are a battlecry, a greeting, and a legend in the Marine Corps. They're marine shorthand for the motto of the Corps--"Semper Fidelis"—"always faithful."[60]

Reagan then, as always, made explicit the values and identifications he wished to promote.

> That marine and all those others like him, living and dead, have been faithful to their ideals. They've given willingly of themselves so that a nearly defenseless people in a region of great strategic importance to the free world will have a chance someday to live lives free of murder and mayhem and terrorism. I think that young marine and all of his comrades have given every one of us something to live up to . . . We cannot and will not dishonor them now and the sacrifices they've made by failing to remain as faithful to the cause of freedom and the pursuit of peace as they have been.

Reagan's romance encapsulated in very emotional terms the justification provided throughout the speech. It described <u>all</u> Americans, by implication, as defenders of freedom. If the identifications were made, Reagan's past actions which placed the U.S. in foreign disputes as "peacekeepers" would be acceptable to his public judges. Likewise, any future policies of the same nature were implicitly approved. The questions about episodic details are subsumed in transcendent values of freedom and peace.

Reagan's Lebanon and Grenada episodes show that a president may divert attention from a troublesome episode by placing a more controlled, or popular, episode before the public. In this case, a press blackout made Reagan's episode easier to construct.[62] His episode was the account of Grenada for several days. The presidential romance used to encompass the episodes also aided Reagan's cause. Since both episodes involved controversial decisions and brought on substantial criticism, President Reagan's ethos was challenged with his episodes. The presidential romance not only gave a "heart felt" justification for acts but, in so doing, reinforced Reagan's credibility. President Reagan also might have employed an anecdote, although certainly not a humorous one, for the same reasons. The anecdote could define a principle underlying the American presence in foreign disputes. A presidential anecdote could avoid problematic details and remind the public of the president's dominant, controlling position.

This case does not exhaust the possible interactions of presidential episodes, anecdotes, and romances. It does, however, indicate that presidential story types and non-narrative discourse may be complementary as rhetorical tools.

Conclusion

In a speech to the Russian people, President Nixon told this anecdote:

> Some of you may have heard an old story told in Russia of a traveler who was walking to another village. He knew the way, but not the distance. Finally he came upon a woodsman chopping wood by the side of the road and he asked the woodsman, "How long will it take to reach the village?"
>
> The woodsman replied, "I don't know."
>
> The traveler was angry, because he was sure the woodsman was from the village and therefore knew how far it was. And so he started off down the road again. After he had gone a few steps, the woodsman called out, "Stop. It will take you about 15 minutes."
>
> The traveler turned and demanded, "Why didn't you tell me that in the first place?"

> The woodsman replied, "Because then I didn't know the length of your stride."

To explore fully the rhetorical characteristics and functions of narrative is a great challenge. Several writers and theorists have addresssed this macroscopic view. However, the broader theoretical narrative parameters must be filled out by detailed analysis of stories as rhetoric. This paper adopted the microscopic perspective in order to illumine presidential stories as strategic discourses. It attempted to measure the "stride" of presidential episodes, anecdotes, and romances. It demonstrated that presidential stories are more than witty diversions from other political rhetoric. On the contrary, presidential stories are a rhetorical alternative in situations where presidents need to justify past actions, to generate support for present and future policy, and to promote particular values through public identifications. Moreover, presidential stories are suited particularly to public persuasion. They are non-threatening, often amusing, interactive rhetorical forms. Thus, presidential stories not only present good reasons for belief and action but simultaneously unite the president with the republic.

Presidential stories, like all rhetorical forms, are not fool-proof. A president accepts risks when he constructs an episode. If he tells too many anecdotes or romances, he risks charges of simplemindedness, of an unwillingness to address "issues," or of "unpresidential" behavior. Timing is important. And, as Gerald Ford proved, some presidents just cannot tell stories. Individual abilities do figure into the storytelling equation. Storytelling is not as simple as it appears and should not be underestimated. Simply put, storytelling is a resource which some presidents must use conservatively and others may exploit to its full potential. A president's storytelling decisions carry both benefits and liabilities which constrain his rhetorical choices. Yet, even given the possible risks, stories are an appealing, malleable rhetorial resource appropriate and recommended for presidential use.

NOTES

[1] "New Pioneers: Remarks at a White House Luncheon, February 12, 1985," Weekly compilation of Presidential Documents, p. 177.

[2] Most of Lincoln's biographies at least mention his storytelling. However, Richard Dorson makes a more careful analysis of Lincoln as a storyteller. See Richard Dorson, Folklore: Selected Essays (Bloomington: University of Indiana Press, 1972), pp. 118-125.

[3] Doris Kearns, Lyndon Johnson and the American Dream (New York: Signet, 1976), p. 370.

[4] See John Osborne, White House Watch: The Ford Years (Washington, D.C.: New Republic Books, 1977) esp. pg. 26.

[5] For this perspective see, Walter R. Fisher, "Narration as a Human Communication Paradigm: The Case of Public Moral Argument," Communication Monographs, 51 (March 1984), pp. 1-22; This work is informed by narrative literature from various academic areas. See J. Askham, "Telling Stories," The Sociological Review (new series) 30 (1982), 554-573; Jeff D. Bass, "The Appeal to Efficiency as Narrative Closure: Lyndon Johnson and the Dominican Crisis, 1965," Southern Speech Communication Journal, 50 (Winter 1985), 103-120; W. Lance Bennett, "Storytelling in Criminal Trials: A Model of Social Judgment," Quarterly Journal of Speech, 64 (1978), 1-22; Arthur C. Danto, "Narration and Knowledge," Philosophy and Literature, 6 (1982), 17-32; Walter R. Fisher, "Toward a Logic of Good Reasons," Quarterly Journal of Speech, 64 (1978), 376-384; Thomas S. Frentz, "Mass Media as Rhetorical Narration," The Van Zelst Lecture in Communication, Northwestern University, Evanston, Illinois, May 1984; Robert A. Georges, "Toard an Understanding of Storytelling Events," Journal of American Folklore, 82 (October-December 1969), 313-328; Bruce E. Gronbeck, "Narrative, Enactment, and Television Programming," Southern Speech Communication Journal, 48 (1983), 229-242; William G. Kirkwood, "Storytelling and Self-Confrontation: Parables as Communication Strategies," Quarterly Journal of Speech, 69 (1983), 58-74; William G. Kirkwood, "Parables as Metaphors and Examples," Quarterly Journal of Speech, 71 (November 1985), 422-440; Richard Lischer, "The Limits of Story," Interpretation, 38 (1984), 26-38; C. Scott Littleton, "A Two-dimensional Scheme for the Classification of Narratives," Journal off American Folklore, 78 (1965), 21-27; W.J.T. Mitchell, Ed., On Narrative (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 1980); Hayden White, "The Historical Text as Literary Artifact," in The Writing of History: Literary Form and Historical Understanding ed. Robert H. Canary and Henry Kozicki (Madison: University of Wisconsin Press, 1978), pp. 50-52; Amos N. Wilder, "Story and Story-World," Interpretation, 37 (October 1983), 353-364;

[6] White, p. 50.

[7] For discussions of the stasis doctrine, see Lee S. Hultzen, "Status in Deliberative Analysis" in The Rhetorical Idiom, essays in rhetoric, Oratory, Language, and Drama, ed. Donald C. Bryant (Ithica, NY: Cornell University Press, 1958), pp. 97-123; Charles Baldwin Sears, ancient Rhetoric and Poetic

(Westport, CN: Greenwood Press, 1924), pp. 49-51, 74-49; Otto Avin Loeb Delter, "Stasis," Speech Monographs, 17 (1950), 345-369; and Ray Nadeau, "Some Aristotelian and Stoic Influences on the Theory of Stases," Speech Monographs, 26 (1959), 248-254.

[8] "Radio and Television Report to the American People Following Renewed Aggression in the Gulf of Tonkin. August 4, 1964," Public Papers of the Presidents, 927-928.

[9] "Radio and Television Report to the American People Following Renewed Agression in the Gulf of Tonkin," 928.

[10] "remarks at Syracuse University on the Communist Challenge in Southeast Asia. August 5, 1964," Public Papers of the Presidents, 806.

[11] "Radio and Telvesion Report to the American People on the Soviet Arms Buildup in Cuba. October 22, 1962," Public Papers of the Presidents, 806.

[12] Richard M. Nixon, "Presidential Taps and Materials," Vital Speeches of the Day, 40 (June 1974), 482-483.

[13] Ronald Reagan, "The Downing of a Korean Airliner," Vital Speeches of the Day, 49 (October 1983), 738-739.

[14] "Remarks at Syracuse," 928.

[15] "Remarks at Syracuse," 928.

[16] "Special Message to the Congress on U.S. Policy in southeast Asia. August 5, 1964," Public Papers of the Presidents, 931.

[17] Cong. Rec., 6 August 1964, p. 18299.

[18] Cong. Rec., 6 August 1964, p. 18399.

[19] Cong. Rec., 6 August 1964, p. 18399.

[20] See "Radio and Television Address to the American People on the Soviet Arms Buildup in Cuba."

[21] "Remarks to the Nation after Authorizing the Use of Federal Troops in Detroit. July 24, 1967," Public Papers of the Presidents, 715-716.

[22] "Remarks to the Nation after Authorizing the Use of Federal Troops," 716.

[23] "Rescue Attempt for American Hostages in Iran. Address to the Nation. April, 25, 1980," Weekly Compilation of Presidential Documents, 773.

[24] See Kearns, p. 353; Witer Lippmann, "The Credibility Gap-I," New York Times, 28 April 1967, Sec. I, p. 17, col. 1; James Deakin, Lyndon Johnson's Credibility Gap (Washington, D.C.: Public Affairs Press, 1968).

[25] William McGaffin and Erwin Knoll, "The White House Lies," Progressive, September 1967, p. 17.

[26] Cong. Rec., 21 February 1968, p. 3817.

[27] For other discussions of Johnson's Tonkin Gulf crisis rhetoric, see Richard A. Cherwitz, "Lyndon Johnson and the 'Crisis' of Tonkin Gulf: A President's Justification of War," Western Journal of Speech Communication, 42 (Spring 1978), 93-104; and Richard A. Cherwitz, "Masking Inconsistency: The Tonkin Gulf Crisis," Communication Quarterly, 28 (Spring 1980), 27-37.

[28] Ther terms used here parallel Stephen Toulmin's distinction between "warrant-using" and "warrant-establishing" arguments. See Stephen Toulmin, The Uses of Argument 2nd ed. (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1969), esp. pp. 120 ff. In this instance, an "ethos-using" story is one that demands that a speaker have high initial ethos. The story uses that ethos as a fundamental support. Later in the story exposition, the term "ethos-building" refers to stories that serve to reinforce or enhance the speaker's ethos.

[29] "Remarks to Polish Americans in Chicago, Illinois. June 23, 1983," Public Papers of the Presidency, 905.

[30] "Remarks in New York City at a Dinner of the Friendly Sons of St. patrick. March 17, 1964," Public Papers of the Presidents, 389.

[31] See Kirkwood, "Parables as Metaphors and Examples."

[32] Kirkwood, "Storytelling and Self-Confrontation," 70-72.

[33] "Remarks at a White House Ceremony Commemorating the Bicentennial Year of Air and Space Flight. February 7, 1983," Public Papers of the Presidents, 199.

[34] "Remarks to New participants in 'Plans for Progress' Equal Opportunity Agreements. January 22, 1964," Public Papers of the Presidents, 211. Johnson told this anecdote again a month later. See "Remarks in Atlantic City at the Convention of the United Auto Workers. March 23, 1964," Public Papers of the Presidents, 408.

[35] Bennett explains in detail the connections people make to understand stories. See Bennett, pp. 11-18. Anecdotes are similar to jokes in the interpretive process needed to interpret meaning. Unlike fables or parables, no moral is states. Rather, the listener must recognize the "point" or inherent paradox that generates amusement. For further analysis of this cognitive process, see Victor Raskin, "Jokes: A Linguist Explains His New Semantic Theory of Humor," Psychology Today, October 1985, pp. 34-39.

[36] See Gronbeck, p. 233.

[37] "University of Notre Dame. Address at Commencement Exercises at the University. May 22, 1977," Public Papers of the Presidents, 954-955.

[38] Fisher calls this comparison a test of "narrative fidelity." See Fisher, "Narration as a Human Communication paradigm," p. 8.

[39] "radio Address to the nation on the Observance of Easter and Passover. April 2, 1983," Public Papers of the Presidents, 489.

[40] See Northrop Frye, Anatomy of Criticism: Four Essays (Princeton: Princeton University Press, 1957), pp. 186-188.

[41] This perspective on epideictic rhetoric is elucidated in Chaim Perelman and L. Olbrechts-Tyteca, The New Rhetoric: A Treatise on Argumentation, trans. John Wilkinson and Purcell Weaver (Notre Dame, IN: Notre Dame University Press, 1969), pp. 48-54.

[42] Oravec expands the role of epideictic so that the listener both revels in the celebratory rhetoric and learns about the exposed value/principles as well. See Christien Oravec, "'Obervation' in Aristotle's Theory of Epideictic," Philosophy and Rhetoric, 9 (1976), 162-173.

[43] "Remarks at a Mississippi Republican party Fundraising Dinner in Jackson. June 20, 1983," Public Papers of the Presidents, 892.

[44] "Remarks at a Mississippi Republican Party Fundraising Dinner," p. 892.

[45] "Address Before the American Society of Newspaper Editors. 1961," Public papers of the Presidents, 304.

[46] Ronald Reagan, "The Problems in Central American," Vital Speeches of the day, 49 (1983), 451.

[47] Perelman and Olbrects-Tyteca, p. 48.

[48] "Remarks to Key Officials of the Internal Revenue Service. February 11, 1964," Public Papers of the Presidents, 287. Johnson told a more elaborate version of this romance a month earlier. In this version, Johnson said that he valued this woman's advice only after that of his mother and his wife. He argues that her problems stem not from a lack of dignity, "because she is possessed with more of it than the President' not because of lack of money, because she it thrifty and frugal, has invested it and has savings not because of lack of ability, because she commands the respect of people who have the power to get the best. But it is all because of color and because of tradition and because of custom." See "Remarks to New Participants in 'Plans for Progress' Equal Opportunity Agreements. January 22, 1964," Public Papers of the Presidents, 214.

[49] Steven Strasser, "The Marine Massacre," Newsweek, 31 October 1983, pp. 20-25.

[50] "Bombing Attacks on the Multinational Forces in Beirut, Lebanon. Remarks upon Returning from Augusta, GA. October 23, 1983," Weekly Compilation of Presidential Documents, 1484.

[51] "Bombing Attacks," 1484.

[52] See Strasser, pp. 22-25.

[53] "Situation in Grenada, Remarks and a Question-and-Answer Session with Reporters. October 23, 1983." Weekly Compilation of Presidential Documents, 1487.

[54] "Situation in Grenada," 1487.

[55] "United States Forces in Grenada. Letter to the Speaker of the House and the President Pro Tempore of the Senate. October 25, 1983." Weekly Compilation of Presidential Documents, 1493-1494.

[56] "Events in Lebanon and Grenada. Address to the Nation. October 27, 1983," Weekly Compilation of Presidential Documents, 1497-1502.

[57] "Events in Lebanon and Grenada," p. 1497.

[58] "Events in Lebanon and Grenada," p. 1497.

[59] "Events in Lebanon and Grenada," p. 1501.

[60] "Events in Lebanon and Grenada," p. 1502.

[61] "Events in Lebanon and Grenada," p. 1502.

[62] Charles Kaiser, "An Off-the-Record War," Newsweek, 7 November 1983, p. 83.

[63] "Moscow: Address to the People of the Soviet Union. The President's Radio and Television Address. May 28, 1972," Weekly Compilation of Presidential Documents, 941-942.